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WHAT IS FAITH.

BY THE

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

REV. R. H. BEATTIE.

"We walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Cor. ii. 7.

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WHAT IS FAITH?

FAITH AS IT RELATES TO EARTHLY THINGS.

What the eye is to the body, faith is to the soul. In relative importance and in office they are alike. The eye is a receptive organ; faith is like this. Through the eye things outward become visible; through faith things invisible become real. Light is the medium of vision; evidence, of faith. By the one, we see what is to be seen in the world and through the universe; by the other, we apprehend things which are not seen in time and eternity. Mistakes are possible through either; our certainty is as complete

through the one as through the other. The eye is essential to the completeness of the body, as by it the ordinary operations of life are carried on. Nor is faith less essential to the completeness of the mind, and the moving and directing all its activities. Take the eye away and there is darkness every where; remove faith and the world is a blank—only there is the difference that the eye may be lost, yet through other organs our connection with material things may be kept up; but take faith away and our interest in existence is at an end. The eye determines where we shall set our feet step by step; and faith determines our way of life. The eye leads the other organs and the whole body; so does faith the whole man. The eye acts under little light, or

much and all kinds of light; but most and best of all under the light of the sun. And faith too acts under many kinds of evidence, in many subjects, and from many sources; but most and best of all under that which comes from the divine mind directly.

The infant shrinks from a strange face, yet is quiet, and without fear goes to sleep in the arms of its mother. Why? It has found where all is well with it. Acts of love without wearying, have already taught it that life lies in the favour of that mother. Its repose on her bosom is the repose of faith.

The child has no thought for its life, but is free from care. It has a home where it finds nurture and all good things; and for itself, the freedom of the place. There is one who

bears all the care and charge, provides all; and the child has only to do and live. Go where it may, it returns here, takes the free use of all, and lies down to sleep without thought of danger. The right, freedom and security it feels are the fruit and evidence of faith—faith in those who are doing all for it.

Early and life-long the world opens its stores of good to us. The child sees and admires; the youth kindles into excitement at the spectacle; the vigorous man pushes his schemes for making the acquisition with his whole strength, and far down the vale of years he still pants in the race. Such power has faith—faith in worldly good—faith in our own means and plans. And hence the stir and commotion, the din and hurry to which there is no

pause, and which turns our entire nature into a restless sea.

The occurrences of life which fall under our own eye, or which are reported to us, become existent and important to ourselves through faith. Testimony, like the evidence of the senses, becomes the medium and ground of faith—as immense in its extent, as it is amazing in its power. It may embrace the account of all men and things now existing, or that have existed, as it includes the testimony of all living witnesses, and of the departed whose records remain.

There are laws which prescribe what is just and right between man and man, and power and authority is delegated to a few to administer these laws. Communities consent to these, and under them rise to high prosperity. The cit-

izen feels secure, and his goods are in peace. Faith alone gives him conscious safety.

Systems of doctrine, in all departments of science and philosophy, are constructed, are published, and gain currency among men. Faith gives them a reception and a place among things that live.

Long after childish things have passed away, and the ministry of a father and mother has ceased, we find ourselves in intimate union with our own species. The bond is faith—faith in the position and power, it may be, of another, or in the acts, professions, attainments, or moral qualities. Skill in the mechanic, genius in the artist, knowledge and experience in the commander of a vessel, or of an army, or in a member of the learned

professions, have power to command our confidence. Goodness, let it appear where it may, has this power pre-eminently. Let the ordinary virtues of our nature appear in any, and they win confidence—as they grow more perfect, confidence increases. The virtuous mind—full of honour, integrity, truth, benevolence—kindles a trust, which stirs and unites more elements of our being than any other earthly thing.

That is to say, that which gives repose to our infancy, and, to our childhood, exemption from care; that by which the world has power to excite desire, and set all out by their several paths in pursuit of its promised gains; that by which testimony takes hold of us, and sways us; that by which government and laws assume majesty

and authority in our eyes; that by which science and philosophy gain their influence with us; and that which places us in union more or less close with our own race, as an act of our own, is FAITH. Through the busy life we are passing here, where our way is all unknown, faith leads us, and under it we go where we do, and become what we are. Nor does it take the lead merely, but to it we owe whatever energy marks our course. As it precedes and controls action, so, as it is strong, effort is vigorous and constant. It connects our active powers with the interests of the present world, and it forms the inspiration of the common mind to the pursuit of these. Faith anticipates results not seen as yet, and apprehends the way to these. Things which do not yet appear are thus substantiated,

and lie out before the mind as real. In this way the various paths of life are filled, and mankind kept in constant pursuit of worldly good; for worldly good is not so much a thing of enjoyment, as of pursuit, and what each one pursues is hidden from the natural eye, and present only by faith. To it we trace the achievements of ambition upon the battle field, and in the political arena, and of genius in the departments of art and science, and of skill and diligence in every field of honest and honourable exertion. The toil and sacrifices which meet us everywhere in the humbler walks of life, and which have given us our great bankers, and commanders, and statesmen, and masters in every profession, illustrate perpetually its power.

Thus faith, as it has to do with

earthly things, in its earliest form is repose in the favour of another while yet the use of speech is not known; in its highest form, it is confidence in a fellow being, grounded upon moral worth; in its universal form, it is the apprehending and relying upon whatever seems worthy of this. Ever is it the bond which unites us to earthly things, and the condition on which men become competitors for the various prizes that are offered.

FAITH IN REGARD TO ETERNAL THINGS.

THE place which faith holds in regard to temporal things, is the type of the place it holds in regard to eternal things. It gives subsistence to these. Through faith we apprehend God, and the great things of his word. Why not? He has declared himself and

these, and there is no special dimness about him or them. The heavens are to him what the types of the law were to the Messiah, in which in figure he became visible. His word, beyond this, as a mirror shows his perfections and glory. The universe is not as distinctly before the eye, as is its Maker before the mind. No mountain, nor river, nor island, nor other natural feature of the earth, is so fully presented to sight, as are the attributes of our Creator to thought. No city, nor any work of art, no man nor community, in what is essential to their being, is so entirely disclosed to the eye, as are eternal things to our minds. There is more left to conjecture, more on which we desire light, without the possibility of obtaining it.

Our own industry has succeeded in

gathering fragments from the course of this world; it has preserved detached thoughts of our race. In the Bible, we have the whole subject before us. The observations of mankind furnish hints, and here and there a hinge of the divine government; the Scriptures exhibit it completely. It were easy to demonstrate this. Our conception of God drawn from the Bible shows it. "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." Every successive step brings out a new view of his perfection, complete in itself, and a fresh point of contrast between him and all else, and so presents him in a clearness of manifestation, that belongs to nothing besides him. His challenge becomes irresistible—"To whom then will ye liken me,

or shall I be equal? I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me, there is no God."

All eternal things, so far as named, are alike clear. Such are the offices and relations of God—Almighty Maker, Preserver, Benefactor, Lawgiver, Lord and Judge of all. No relations between men, or between man and his works, that take the same names, are more obvious than these. The creation of man, his immortality, the covenant made with him, his temptation and fall, the law of sin, and the reign of death, and the recovery of man, are topics as well defined, and as readily apprehended, as any other historical facts. The further we enter into the details and mysteries of this book, the more this impression is confirmed.

The divine subsistence in Three Per-

sons, equal in power, perfection, and glory, one in essence and life, suggests what we cannot comprehend; but as a direct statement of this profound matter, it is without any darkness at all. The eternal purpose to save sinners, the choice of mediation as the plan, the eternal covenant in which the plan was settled, the determining to whom the benefits of the covenant should extend, the fixing upon the only-begotten Son for the work of fulfilling its conditions, and for conducting its administration, are statements quite as intelligible as any recorded acts of any human government. The union of the person of the eternal Son with the human nature, the steps and the measure of his humiliation, his obedience to his Father's will, his death, as a vicarious sacrifice for the

sins of his people, his resurrection, ascension, and glory, the offices he fills as expounder of the divine will, and high priest over the house of God, and Lord of all, with the blessings he dispenses, are remarkable not more as things lying beyond the range of our unaided faculties, than for the perfect distinctness with which they are exhibited.

The Sabbath, the sanctuary, preaching, prayer, and praise, are not more obvious to our senses, than is the office of the Holy Ghost to our minds —his office in renewing the whole man after the image of God, by these particular steps—convincing us of sin, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, renewing our wills, uniting us to the Saviour, and being himself the unfailing fountain of life in

the soul; the act of justifying the ungodly that believe in Jesus; the putting such among the children; the giving them present peace, abounding consolation, perfect holiness, and an abundant entrance into the heavenly state; like the raising the dead, the judging the world, and giving to every man according to his works, are facts as readily apprehended as are the ordinary occurrences of life. Faith, repentance, love, hope, and the entire experience of the soul through the truth, "which is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth," are names of things that are as perfectly marked, as any other mental acts or states. The business which is put upon our hands, living unto God, embracing self-denial, renunciation of the world, including its dictation and counsel in things

which pertain to God, personal surrender to the authority of Jesus, and hearty consecration to the service of God under him; the holding all things from God, and using all in well-doing for him—all expressed in one word, following Christ, is as easily discerned as any business the world proposes. The account of the soul which is furnished in the Scriptures, puts the subject before us in a light alike new and intelligible, as it clothes it with a grandeur that inspires us with awe. Let the results of all metaphysical investigations be brought together; have we this?—have we so much as an intelligible view of man? What other path of life, we may ask, is plain like that which lies before us in the law of God? Each separate thought of revelation is a great deep:

we cannot fathom it, neither can we mistake it. These truths are like the stars, self-illuminated, and which shine out without dimness or confusion upon every beholder. The Book bears this marvellous character—through it God has lighted up a new firmament over us immeasurably more gorgeous than that upon which our eyes first open.

This new region of thought gives scope for a new exercise of faith. In this case, faith takes its highest sense, to give which exhausts all the ideas we have found it to embrace, as it relates to earthly things. What it is in the infant, which reposes in its parent's love, that it is in the soul's repose in the love of God. What it is in regard to testimony, and evidence generally about things temporal, that it is in regard to the divine testimony about

eternal things. What it is in regard to the interests of the present life, that it is in regard to the spiritual interests, which have opened upon us with the revelation God has made of himself. It is confidence in a person on the grounds of his power, his intelligence, and his moral perfections; it is full belief of every declaration he has made: it is trust in God and belief of the truth found in his word.

Faith, in this case, differs from all previous exercises of it. In greatness, it corresponds to the subjects to which it engages and unites us. It also gives a new character to our existence and nature, as it finds its warrant and supports in grounds entirely distinct and new, and alike ample and sufficient. It introduces us into new conditions of being. It puts us under the controlling power

of this wondrous system of truth, and its more wondrous author. In this is the rise of a new spiritual experience and manner of life.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FAITH.

FAITH *establishes a connection between us and the Author of our being*, not on his part, for that existed before, but on our part. The soul comes to the consciousness of the connection of its own being with his. It finds, what it knew not before, that it lives, moves, and has its being in God. As the branch lives in the vine, as the stream lives in the fountain, so has it now a conscious existence in God. The seed which is put into the moistened soil, will germinate in a cellar and grow into something there; but brought out into the open air and under the genial in-

fluences of the sun, it finds in its new circumstances a full development. The Lord God is a sun, and through faith the soul passes into his direct, pervading, and all-controlling influences. It lives, as seeing Him who is invisible. In itself, it finds entire dependence, and it finds his claims and control no less absolute. Every aspect of the divine nature attracts and binds the soul to him. God in Christ reconciles the subject of sin. His authority, justice, holiness, and truth, vindicated and established in the cross, make him glorious in the eyes of him that believes. His compassion and grace, expressed in the freeness of pardon, and fulness of peace, inspire the soul with new affections that take fast hold of Him. There is poetry and something more in the words, "Whom have I in heaven but

thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?"

The objects and aims of life are all changed. The question is no longer what the man himself prefers, but what God will have him to be and do. His own wishes and decisions go for nothing. The purpose of God in his creation, now known, is what he sets himself to fulfil. His conviction is, that he "no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." The questions, what he shall eat and what he shall drink, and who will show him any good, are not the great questions any more. The heart is to be made pure, and the body turned into a temple of the Holy

Ghost. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." Along with this, holiness is to be extended, good and not evil is to be done universally. The whole man, with his body and spirit and means of effort and influence, is put under law to Christ; and nothing is to be sought or tolerated, but what has the sanction of His teachings and example. That he succeed in the world is no longer the essential matter, but that the authority and honour of God be asserted and maintained in a rightly ordered life. That he be rich or learned, or in honour, becomes a secondary consideration—the higher aim of doing the will of God from the heart

having supplanted this. The order which God has laid down becomes his order, that we ourselves become subject to the will of God, and the flesh subservient to the Spirit, and the things of this world, to those of the world to come.

New means and instrumentalities are provided, and these are put in requisition. The mind apprehends the truth; it sees the use of external ordinances; it takes hold of these, viz: the word, sacraments and prayer, along with conversation, beneficent action, and godly living, and employs them in the new service which seeks directly the Saviour's honour.

There is a new rule of life, which defines our duties universally, and which through faith is transferred to the heart. The way in which we should

walk for evermore is defined, as in the word and example of the Saviour, so now in the apprehension of the mind. The rule is peculiar, in that it is a formal declaration of the divine will, bears the stamp of his authority, and through faith is actually put into the possession of man by his act.

WALKING BY FAITH.

WALKING by faith includes the idea of *subsisting upon the providence and grace of God.* Independence becomes dependence; self-support gives place to waiting upon God in the use of his means. Man goes forth to his labour no more alone. The earth is the Lord's. Over it he ever ruleth by his power. The convictions which faith brings are such as Eliphaz uttered—"I would seek unto God, and

unto God would I commit my cause, which doeth great things and unsearchable, marvellous things without number: who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields: to set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprises —but he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hands of the mighty. He maketh sore, and he bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." To faith is disclosed a plan of providence, and a plan of salvation, alike perfect and unchangeable. These embrace all the proper objects of life,

bring them forward, and keep them in their right order, and open an infallible way to success. Faith accepts these, and now he who before laboured alone, becomes a co-worker with God, in a plan which conducts him to what he desires, and to all that is to be desired. If once he would have said of his successes, "My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth;" the language he now holds is, "The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad."

And when we walk by faith, *we have the glory of God as the final end of our existence in view.* Beyond all earthly interests and all personal aims lies this, the common end of all. The Lord hath made all things for himself, and his glory is seen from all. If the universe be a lens, then is this its

focus. Every ray emanating from him, having fulfilled its mysterious errand, takes a direction to this point, and all combined form the perfect disclosure of his glory. If the sun be the image of the light which is inaccessible that surrounds him, the insect that dances in its beams, and the flower whose exquisite beauties are penciled by its rays, yea, all the beauteous forms and variegated scenery of earth lighted up by it, are but successive reflections of His glory, who fills earth and heaven. Every way of his providence, the most mysterious as the most familiar, like the plan of salvation, conducts us to a point—as though this were its single end—whence opens before us naught but an unclouded and boundless view of the glory of God. Through faith, the soul rises to this great con-

ception of its own being and destiny; and now and ever, its earnest inquiry is, how it may most honour God in the person of his Son; and its interest in existence becomes intense, as its consciousness grows clear that God is glorifying himself, and will for ever be glorious in it.

To walk by faith, *is to find rest for our souls in the favour of God*—rest from the cares which distract us, in view of the divine ends of earthly care, and the far better and more enduring substance in heaven; rest from the fears that disturb us, from the assurance of the full protection of our heavenly Father; rest from the troubles the world brings, on the ground that they are ordered and controlled by Him who is engaged to save us; rest from the sorrows which consume us, from the sympathy

breathed by the Saviour through the gospel for us. Faith discovers that life lies in his favour, and so puts an end to our looking for any good out of this; faith follows the counsel, "Cast all your care upon him;" faith accepts his assurance, "All things work for good to them that love God;" faith embraces as true the statement, "All things are yours;" faith beholds Christ upon the throne, introduces the soul into citizenship in his kingdom, and finds his present arrangements for our progress to every great object of life, not more complete than is the entertainment provided in the heavenly state when the labour here is over. For these are mutually connected and dependent—parts of one whole, and to be in possession of one is to be conscious heir of all. As the heir apparent, while

yet a child, may find in the persons who have charge of him, in the attentions he receives, and in the measures which are taken with him, so many proofs of the greatness to which he is born heir, and as the title of King, the throne, the power and the homage are no less truly parts of the one inheritance, which is his when he is yet a child; so does faith put us instantly in possession of such expressions of God's good will, and introduces us into such arrangements for our best good as are linked in with higher, and give us present assurance that what we have is the first part, and but the first part—itself the pledge of the inheritance which is "incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away."

And as faith in the lower sense and in the ordinary uses in the affairs of

life, fixes upon some one thing as most to be desired, and upon some special means for gaining this, which are plied with less or more diligence; so in the higher sense, does faith fix upon holiness as the interest of the soul, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the way to it; and as is the intensity of its desire for the holiness, is the tenacity with which it holds fast to him who is its Author and Finisher. It realizes the one as it becomes identified with the other. His offices embrace all and secure all, and the chief act of faith is receiving and resting upon him. The walking by faith is the having one's life hid with Christ in God. In Jesus is the source of wisdom and knowledge, in him is the virtue to cleanse it from all unrighteousness, and give peace to the conscience, and in him is the kingly

power which brings freedom from sin, submission and safety. He too is its guide all the way, the companion and friend who shares its griefs, lightens its burdens, encourages its hopes and whose communion cherishes and matures in it what is true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report.

Such is the sacred use of faith—into this does it convert life. In this use it is characterized by the magnitude of the interests which life is found to involve, and the definiteness and permanence of the foundation on which they are secured. When our faith ceases to be simple belief in the evidence of our senses, and in the testimony of others like ourselves, in what relates to our business and interests in the present world, and confidence in worldly acquisitions as de-

sirable, and in our ways and means to gain them; when it rises to belief in the testimony of God, on the great verities of his being and of our own, and confidence in Jesus Christ as the way out of all evil, and to life's true end; then do we exchange shadows for realities, and a foundation which is never settled, for a foundation that can never be moved. There is no venture, no more risk. God, in absolute perfection, is actually before us. The counsels of his heart are made known, and his way, which is perfect. His remedy for our sin is infallible, and his way of applying it is made plain. The example of Jesus we cannot mistake. He draws us nigh unto God now, and leads us nowhere but to the Father. No other work is so plain as that to which he calls us; the

means to be used in no other case are so well known; the motives are not so clear; the helps are not so nigh; success is not so sure. To believe in God, what is it but to put on Christ? To put on Christ, what is it but to work the works of God? To work the works of God, what is it but to enter into the joy of our Lord?

THE SUPPORTS OF FAITH.

WHAT is there to sustain such faith? Doubtless, the true answer is, the power and grace of God. Yet these are exerted in accordance with our rational nature; and if the character of faith be extraordinary, it is not more so than are the supports of faith he has provided.

1. There is the Book in which the truth is fixed in definite characters,

and made intelligible. Here all its materials are set before us in permanent forms, to be examined at will. Around this book, and the body of truth it contains, Providence has welded, link by link, a chain of external evidence, that separates it from all other systems, and places it, as far as such evidence can do this, upon the foundation of a divine authority. The everlasting hills attest the record. Ararat and Sinai and Calvary are as pillars on which are inscribed his deeds. What a weight of testimony from them, touching the grand measures introduced into his providential government by which his interposition has so often saved us! Rivers and cities, and seas and lands, not a few, render similar testimony to other parts of the record. The Nile,

the rivers of Babylon, the Jordan, the Red sea, the Mediterranean, the Dead sea, and the sea of Galilee, states which need not be named, Nineveh and Babylon, Tyre and Sidon, Damascus and Antioch, Smyrna and Ephesus, Corinth and Athens, Rome and Jerusalem—the waters ever the same—the cities and states alike in their splendor and decay, remain as monuments—a chain of independent witnesses to the truth of the sacred narrative. But the Book speaks for itself. Its living characters, and all its transactions; its tragic scenes, and their actors, are all before us under the light of distinctly enunciated and unalterable principles of right, and command our approval or condemnation. The intrinsic excellence of its matter bespeaks its Author. It is God who

claims to speak in it, and while there is nothing in it like us, there is every thing in it like him. Its contents fairly before the mind, are a manifestation of God to it, not less distinct, and far more complete, than that which is made by means of the earth and heavens. A man is no more certain, when his eyes are sound, that the sun gives him light, that its light removes the darkness that veils the earth, and discloses the actual forms and relations of material things, than he who apprehends the truth herein revealed, is that he too is in light in which the corresponding discoveries are made over the whole sphere of our moral being. If I know that the light of the sun is pure, as well do I know, from the revelation of God, that there is perfect moral purity in him.

If darkness be the absence of light, I am as fully assured that sin is withdrawal from God; if darkness cannot generate light, I see as plainly that sin cannot produce holiness—that holiness is God displacing sin, and as clearly do I see that holiness is the way to happiness.

The harmony between the teachings of this book and our intuitive convictions is complete so far as our own judgments are reliable; and when we enter the region of mysteries, *i. e.*, where the aspects and relations of things grow confused through sin, we here meet with nothing in the Scriptures that is out of harmony with our constitution at present—no, not in all that which lies out of the scope of our own discoveries. The measures taken for restoring the sinner are in keeping

with all antecedents in the divine administration, and furnish the medium of a combined exhibition of the divine perfections to which we know not a parallel. And what is of no less significance, the supplies for the necessities which sin has brought in upon us, are wonderfully apt and complete. The change of state and of character, for which they provide, preparatory to our transfer to another sphere, where sin and sorrow shall not enter, does alone, as it does most exactly, answer our urgent demands. Divine renewal is the only adequate provision for the deepest necessities of our fallen nature, at the same time that it equals the requisites for endless life in heaven. With this notice of this support of faith, let us pass from it, assured of its sufficiency, and equally assured that no

view we can present of the word of God will ever show how sufficient it is.

"'Tis a broad land of wealth unknown,
Where springs of life arise,
Seeds of immortal bliss are sown,
And hidden glory lies."

2. Analogy furnishes a distinct support. In nature nothing stands by itself. One thing is connected with other things; each is connected with all; all are dependent upon each. One thing is made for another; the scale is ascending; the lower is made for the higher. Elements sustain vegetable life; the vegetable kingdom supports the animal; all minister to man. All, we may say, are made for man. From the lowest, each contributes something to what is above it, till the contributions of all reach man. The Scriptures show us that this process does not stop

here. They fill the chasm between man and his Maker, and show us the process complete, as man, through redemption, bears the revenues that come from all to him, up to the Maker and Lord of all. The plan brought forward in this book, which assigns man a place analogous to that of the other creatures, and which alone secures this practical result, we may justly believe to be of God. By it he is doing with us what he had done with all linked in with us, yet lower than we in the scale of existence.

We carry this much farther. Earthly things are types of heavenly. The Sabbath foreshadows heaven; the ministry have a representative character; the water of baptism is an emblem of spiritual cleansing; the Lord's Supper is a significant representation of the sac-

rifice of Christ, and of the common life the believing have in him. These are appointed figures of eternal things; but not exclusive of other things. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. The products of his power and skill are of double service. They avail for our temporal welfare; they minister to our eternal. The rain and the dew, the mown grass and the tender herb, are signs of things vastly more important. And so is the sunshine now gilding the mountain tops, again bathing hill and valley, and the running stream, and the fathomless sea; so are night and whirlwind, and storm and hail; the apple tree, too, and the palm, and the cedar, and every tree that hath seed in itself, and every plant, and the flower and the seed; the animal, also, in the beauty of its plumage,

the delicacy of its structure, and in its strength, gentleness, meekness, forecast, ferocity; the sword, also, and all armour, the hammer, the adamant, the precious metals, implements of business, the arts of trade and of industry, all deliverances from evil, and all gains, our earthly relationships all, and our offices of authority and trust each one, our science and laws, our prosperity and adversity, our good and evil, our happiness and misery, birth, life, death. These all fill one office—foreshadow eternal things—in which, so far as we can trace the Maker's way, they answer their great design.

Like the hieroglyphics in an old Egyptian temple, where the worshippers meet no more, which once set familiar things before the eyes of living men, they certify us of a grand and imposing ser-

vice under a form of life, which has long since passed away. And as there is one sun which lights up our world, and one way of living in it; as by means of a common atmosphere, and other agents in nature, which conspire to fulfil a common design, and by nutriment drawn from a common earth, which is to be prepared by our own industry, and appropriated by our own act; so does the gospel reveal one God and Father of us all, and one atonement, and one life-giving Spirit, as it lays on us, in common, the necessity of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, as the method of our entering upon a new life, and the one way to the grand result for which we exist here. The correspondence between the two plans —the one for making sure temporal,

the other eternal good—is exact. God devises both. He provides all. He goes before, we co-operate with him. Life in each case begins in faith: and the faith in which the earthly life begins, is the most perfect type of the faith in which the eternal life begins. The parent—the being, of all that is created, who loves us best, excites and cherishes it in the one case; God, who loves us more, comes in the place of the parent to receive it, and turn it into the instrument of a new life. The same grand difficulties are to be met in the two cases, and the like harmonies established in the problems touching the absoluteness of God in knowledge, will and purpose, and the dependence, liberty and obligations of man. Even in our failures, the resemblance holds. Our mistakes and follies throw

us from the track, and disappoint us of worldly success, as do also our vices and crimes; but they have a deeper significance, like our sufferings which do now connect us with an unseen, a righteous and an irresistible authority.

The very government men establish and support is constructed out of materials found in the moral constitution, which is derived from the Author of our being. It is our recognition of the principles of moral order on which the divine government is based, and our attempt to give them a practical application among ourselves. In this is a representation more or less full of that authority in the person of the Maker, which wisdom guides and justice establishes for ever. In connection with this our attempt, grand moral questions —of which slavery is an example—are

kept ever before us, and we find ourselves actually dealing with subjects that have their root away in things eternal, and admit of no solution but in the wisdom and will of God.

The Bible is to all this what the gospel is to the law. Its views of our being and relations, and the ends to which we are appointed—so extended and so clear—furnish the interpretation, just as our own experience gives the fulfilment of all. When we pass on into the midst of the disclosures of revelation, these mute signs grow significant, and all nature becomes full of truth as it is full of life.

3. The gospel exhausts its themes, as respects our faculties. It takes our ideas on spiritual things, and expands them to the limits of our faculties and indefinitely beyond. It takes our idea

of goodness, and it gives us a conception of this in our own nature, which includes all it ever does when our minds act alone, and which adds to this, as in the graces that belong to godliness, vastly more. Nor is this all: it gives us our idea of goodness infinitely expanded, and this in a series of illustrations which leave us under a sense of our own feebleness to wonder at its length, and breadth, and depth, and height, as consummated in love that passeth knowledge. So with every other element of our moral being. Man regenerated and restored reaches a measure of perfection never dreamed of in our philosophy, and to which philosophy can contribute not an additional idea. The gospel takes our ideas of virtue and vice, of right and wrong, of truth and error, of good and

evil, and expands these. How wonderfully changed from what they were as they come before us under the dimmest light of our ignorance, or the best light of our wisdom! No one of those transmutations of which we read in Arabian romance, exceeds the change that passes upon our own ideas, when they come forth clothed with the light of the gospel. The connecting the divine with the human mind in the manner it does, the introducing a new standard of character and duty, and the bringing in the means and the power of effecting a spiritual renovation in us, lead to the disclosure of evil, where no evil appeared formerly, and of measures of good which had ceased to be visible, because of the darkness that had come in upon us with sin.

The gospel is a series of solutions of

the problems which relate to our spiritual being and destiny. Human reason has occupied itself with them, but, as it appears in the light of the gospel, only to make the demonstration complete that the wisdom of man is foolishness with God. Sin, as a fact in the history of man, has received its full enunciation only in this Book. In its first act, a transgression of the law of God—the act, not of the individual, but of the nature, vitiating that nature throughout, blinding the understanding, depraving the will, corrupting the affections, producing impotence for further service under God, setting the nature adrift and upon a course of sinning, laying it under sentence of death, and exposing it to a perpetual curse—shown in the course of this world and in the dispensations of Providence, and

to be shown in the retributions which follow:—such a statement comprehending our entire nature, and corresponding to the facts throughout, is made only by the wisdom which framed this Book.

The idea of sacrifice, as the method of putting away sin, is our own: however introduced, found among us from the beginning. But as held commonly it is a mystery. The slaughter of an unoffending animal, as a propitiation for sin, is something the world has always done, but never explained. The connection between the means and the end does not appear upon any inspection, however close. The gospel takes this idea: it brings forward the substance in place of the shadow. It shows us the Son of God, in the form of man, descending into extreme hu-

miliation with us, and making the substitutionary offering of his services and of his sufferings the ground of our redemption, and the basis of a dispensation of mercy; bringing righteousness and life again to the world. It is in the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, the divine perfections all shine out once more upon us, and in the presence of our Father reconciled, we find the idea of sacrifice perfected.

As an example of the completeness the gospel puts upon our ideas, let it suffice to mention the offices of the Saviour. Compare our native ideas of a Prophet, and of a Priest, and of a King, with the ideas of a Prophet as we have this in Jesus, whose word is a perfect rule of faith and life to every man, in every relation and service, and

whose Spirit is a present and infallible interpreter of the same to all who desire this; and of a Priest as this is found in Him, whose priceless offering, and perpetual intercession bring us unqualified forgiveness, and free access to the Father, and confidence to ask what we will; and of a King, as this is embodied in the Lord's Christ, whose administration looks to spiritual ends, every way to be sought, and at every cost secured, and being the continual acting of divine wisdom, justice, benevolence and power, embraces all and fails in nothing; and behold the difference between his thoughts and ours. Such perfection is ever found in the treatment of our subjects in the gospel. And when this is fairly known, what can we do but walk by faith? There is no alternative we could adopt but would immeasurably degrade us.

4. A comparison of the gospel with other schemes of doctrine and life, adds not a weak support to faith. We find nothing else so good or that supplies its place. Not that there is any lack of schemes. The imagination, never at rest, is as prolific now as of old. Communism, Socialism, Mormonism, and Spiritualism—inventions of our times, invite public favour. Philosophy is perhaps not quite so disdainful, yet equally inflated by its professed discoveries as when it encountered and spurned the gospel on Mars' Hill. From this source many schemes in their principles and results are before us. What the apostle Paul saw, we see, and more distinctly than he, for we have the working and products of the same spirit eighteen centuries more before us, and what he said of

the efforts of unassisted reason is true now: "The world by wisdom knew not God. Thinking themselves wise, they became fools." No other system of doctrine can ever compare with the gospel, for none can introduce its characteristic features. If it take its idea of God, then it must take its idea of sin; if it admit its idea of sin, then it must go on to connect the provisions found in mediation for our deliverance from sin. Or if it accept the doctrine of mediation, then it must incorporate the doctrine of sin. If it introduce the truth that God is love, then it must have the illustration of this which is found in the gospel, as without this the truth is without demonstration. Hence every other scheme must exclude, and in fact is found to exclude, those truths which constitute the distinction and

glory of the gospel. What they have left, in the comparison, is but the refuse. Of this the best evidence is that these systems actually discard God, or leave out all that in the divine nature which sublimates the gospel and gives it consistency, beauty, perfection, and power. If they rise to the character of profound speculations, then they may not be without service in a limited sphere; yet the difference of the elements precludes comparison with the views of the divine nature, and of essential truth as set forth in the gospel. If they are practical systems, as Mormonism or Spiritualism, then in their constituent material, and in their aims do they show that, while they admit of being compared with one another, they do not admit of comparison with the system of truth propounded in the

Bible. A sinful man is a subject of contrast with a sinless angel; so is a scheme of impiety or of sensuality with the gospel, which carries our thoughts to personal holiness and infinite purity. The speculative systems leave the mind on the rack, and the heart far from rest; these other schemes sear the conscience and work away from the soul any remains of the divine image, or leave it without any increase of goodness; the gospel ever tends to change us into something better, as in the first discovery it makes to us of God, it gives us a ground of rest.

The capacity of the gospel for good is a point so important that it should have a separate notice. Its principles, when received, displace what is evil in us, and what is destructive in the world. They restore righteousness,

order, and harmony in the soul, and universally as they are extended. They bring us at once to the Saviour. To learn of him and to follow him is to separate from sin. Whither he goes we know, and the way we know. This system is of the nature of light, which diffuses itself without being diminished, and which may guide a world, as it guides an individual, into perfect righteousness. Where philosophical speculation, divorced from revealed truth, and the practical schemes we have named, lead, may be known from the first; for they set out with ejecting God, and can but bring a steady confirmation in ungodliness. It is not matter of doubt, that God is not in all their thoughts; their schemes are not his plan; they do not rest on his authority; they do not

claim his support, nor depend on his blessing for success—plainly they show themselves to be none of his. Without God, they are without life. At the outset, they separate themselves from the vital power which is found in the divine benevolence, and throughout they act in opposition to his designs. Discarding God, they are without power for good.

And now, let modern systems of philosophy which are at war with Scripture, as Pantheism and Materialism, spread among educated men, and let such systems as Mormonism and Spiritualism work their way everywhere among the masses, they would be no substitute for the gospel. They would do nothing better for the world than the old masters of philosophy and old paganism did. They would

furnish entertainment to reason, they would direct mankind to sensual ends; but they leave them without the knowledge of God or way of access to him. They give us no impressions from this source; they make us forgetful of our highest good; they surrender us to the full power of sin; they lead us to despair. The gospel would be none the less needed then, than when it was first spoken by our Lord. The more fully they display themselves by taking root in our nature, the more clearly do we see the obligations of the world to the gospel, and the more irresistibly do we find ourselves drawn to it, as the only existing, and the only possible source of a true scheme of doctrine and life—possible, we say, since God moves in and with it alone. His presence effects whatever good

it accomplishes, and this may work with like success to the limits of his providence.

Its capacity for good fills us with confidence. We cannot discard it, without discarding God and the only practical plan of being co-workers with him in fulfilling the designs of his benevolence.

5. We name the support which is found in experience. There is a perfect agreement between our own finding and what is affirmed in the word; and this extends through all our personal experience, and through all history. The truth subjects itself to this practical test. It describes a change wrought by it in the soul, which it defines by our birth. It details its effects within the limits of our own consciousness and conduct. It propo-

ses new methods of procedure, and declares the results. It prescribes, in particular, one course which will put an end to doubt, and inspire us with fullest confidence. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They who use this test become satisfied. Does the truth affirm our sinfulness; does it describe sin in its nature, guilt, power, and effects upon the intellect, making it blind to spiritual things; upon the will, fixing this in evil; upon the affections, alienating these from God; upon our entire conduct, turning this into revolt and lawlessness; upon our condition, leaving to us existence without God, without holiness, and without hope? There are souls that find all this in them-

selves. Does the truth propose a Saviour, and invite our confidence in him, and assure us of pardon and peace? The same mind, through the believing acceptance of the Saviour finds itself restored, its standing entirely changed, its relation to sin entirely changed, and its disposition as regards God and his will, entirely changed. Does the truth affirm, that he who confesses and forsakes his sins shall find mercy? He who does this, finds it so. Does it declare, that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin? Nothing becomes more certain to our minds, than that holiness is derived from the virtue of the Saviour's death, and is found in union with him. Does the truth give assurance of the divine protection, guidance, and help under all circumstances, to such as live

godly? Does it promise safety from temptation, and consolation under all grief? They who walk in the way of righteousness, have but one testimony on these points. He who repents and believes, and obeys the gospel, through this very process, comes into possession of evidence that satisfies him. The gains of godliness which are proposed in the form of promise, are actually found. The discovery and possession are ground of assurance. As he who washes his person, and keeps his raiment clean and whole, and provides for himself a supply of wholesome food, who is cheerful, and enjoys good society, and keeps to industry and frugality, and enjoys all in moderation, extracts the most good out of his earthly life, and carries along with him the evidence that his

way is right and best, so he who enters upon the life of faith. He needs no further witness. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

In this department, the evidence is ever increasing. The testimony is uniform. One mind, under the saving influence of the truth, expresses the convictions of all other minds so affected. Such testimony has been rendered from every generation, and by persons in every stage of culture, and under every variety of circumstance. From schools of science, from marts of business and trade, from fields of toil, they appear in growing numbers, who, themselves saved, assure us of the saving strength of the Lord's Anointed. From scenes of

burning rivalries, and of cruel strife and carnage, and of unhallowed pleasures, not a few make their escape, through help brought them and salvation by the same grace, who, as special monuments of mercy, testify of the grace of God that is in them. Children and youth, upon whose eyes the world is just opening its enchanting scenes; men and women in the maturity of their powers, who have passed into the midst of these scenes, and while the sun of prosperity is shining in its strength; aged and venerable men and women, from whose eyes these scenes are fast fading, do with one mind and one mouth glorify God, whom they have discovered in his Son Jesus Christ. The poor render a testimony, strong enough to carry the cause. The testimony of that other

class, without education, who cannot argue for Christ, but can suffer and die for him, is like it in force.

The loveliest characters, the most useful and beneficent lives, the happiest homes of earth give forth a volume of testimony which decides the case. From scenes of sorrow, from the chamber of sickness, from beds of death, from prisons and dungeons, from the rack and stake, truth gathers her witnesses—a great company, clothed in white, of whom the world is not worthy. Combine the testimony of this kind, include in it the verification of Scripture in the form of prophecy, in the experience of the church and world combined, as attested by our own histories, and we have a support of faith which no art can weaken, but which grows stronger with every

generation. It adds greatly to the character and sufficiency of this support, to observe that the fulfilment of promise in the sanctification of the soul, and of prophecy in the great events of time, is not the result of natural laws, but depends upon the divine agency, directly and constantly exerted. The most sacred festival of the Egyptians in early ages—the Niloa—was celebrated upon the eve of the overflowing of the Nile. There they rendered highest honours to their gods, and united their supplications that the waters might inundate and enrich their land. They thought that an event which depended upon the stable ordinances of nature fell out in answer to their prayers, when, in fact, it would have equally happened without them. Unlike this are the events

which fall out in christian experience, and in our world-history, in correspondence to promise and prophecy. There is no reason why the sinner should find in his own experience the holiness the gospel proposes, or why the events that transpired should occur apart from the constant operation of God. The fulfilment of the Scripture to man personally, and to the world collectively, being a divine act, is a constant attestation of the record by its Author. It is this that gives to the common christian mind its immovable confidence in the truth, and which gives to the truth, by itself, its sufficiency, as the practical support of the life of faith.

6. The victories of truth form a support of the life of faith. The form in which divine truth comes in among

us is peculiar. "I am the truth," says the Saviour. Truth came to us not in signs and outward forms, not in thoughts clearly expressed, not in word, but in and with the energies of one, in the form of man, who has life in himself. Its existence here is perpetuated in the same connection. Hence it is a force, which through the ceaseless activity of mind and will, in one who is alive for evermore, and who quickeneth whom he will, must act mightily against error and sin. There is an energy in it which pushes its conquests everywhere.

To estimate these properly, let it be observed, we have no difficulty in accounting for the success of error. This depends upon the corruption of nature. In this one fact, we have the

explanation of the growth of error, into a paganism which overspread the earth; and equally, of the prevalence of systems of doubt and unbelief, and gross perversions of the gospel. But in this is not found any explanation of the spread of truth. How is it, that truth which exposes the vice of our nature, and propounds not one doctrine that flatters us, but a series of doctrines which mortify and abase us, and leave us no ground but for repentance, and send us as pensioners to the divine mercy for all things, makes a way for itself in the world? God is in it, and this makes all plain.

Its progress has been made against strong and steady opposition. It has had to conquer every foot of territory it holds. The physical force, the mental energies, the moral power of

the world have raised every possible barrier to its progress. Philosophy has stood aloof, and held it in scorn. Sensualism, in one class very grovelling, in another assuming to be highly intellectual, has aimed at driving it from social life. Weapons have been prepared out of science, of superior polish and keenness, before which it has been thought the gospel must fall. Hoary-headed scepticism, now as ever, furnishes to the multitude, free of charge, arms both for assault and defence, which, among such a race as ours, are fit for immense service. The sagacity of statesmen, the authority of the magistrate, the sword, and the entire force of government have been put in requisition, to arrest and exterminate it; yet, without any exception, the result, thus far, has been

the triumph of the gospel. The only form of assault that has seemed to prevail, and paralyze the truth, has been that made by the man of sin, sitting in the temple of God.

The means of its progress have served to define and exalt it; the measures of its adversaries have served to discover its varied and ample resources; and the extent of its success reveals its boundless power for good.

The means have promised nothing. The first ministers were men to be laughed at by the refined, learned and influential. The doctrine they taught, excited the dislike of one class, and the ridicule of another—each moving in the van of society. It was a stumbling block to the Jews; to the Greeks, foolishness. Its preachers, in the eyes of one class, were the chief

of sinners; in the eyes of the other, only babblers. The means have never been changed. The treasure has been kept in earthen vessels. Successful ministers, those who have accomplished anything in this cause, have been such as have known nothing but Christ, and him crucified; and have found work enough in expounding the mysteries of the kingdom. Other things have been done in the name of Christ, very great and marvellous, by other means, but the furtherance of the gospel has been by the preaching of the gospel. Other ways, other gospels have been devised, but they have come in without the sanction, they have lived without the blessing, and they have gone out, or are to go out, under the curse of Him, who rules in the midst of his enemies, and sends the rod of his strength out of Zion.

The means proper to the gospel have never been used in vain. The apostles record their experience: "We preach Christ crucified, unto them which are called, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God." They lived long enough to witness such effects of the gospel, against stubborn prejudice, against polytheism, and against science falsely so called, as assured them that God was in it, and that his right hand and his holy arm had gotten him the victory. As men who find the enemy vanquished, and the field their own, they ask, "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" "The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than

men." Their own insufficiency assured them of the presence and power of God, and they say—what else could they say?—"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." If apostles could say this, what must we not say? We have before us this spectacle. We see too the material force, the intellectual and moral power of ancient Rome fail and yield to the control of the gospel.

We witness greater things than these. Within the kingdom of Jesus Christ we

witness a grand revolt; it extends to all provinces, to all departments, and to all classes. The government was seized; its power and patronage were assumed by one who claimed to be the vicegerent of Christ. New laws and ordinances and institutions were introduced. The old order was subverted. If an ordinance was left, its design was perverted. Christ had a place in heaven, but with the provision that his offices were to be dispensed with on earth. He was no more the Prophet, teaching sinners the way of salvation, nor the Priest, by whom the heart-broken sinner might have access to the divine mercy, nor the King, in whose present authority all acts of government are performed, and all subjects have equal interest and immediate protection and help at all times. All this was changed sim-

ply by abolishing his own grand ordinance of preaching, and substituting for it a series of ceremonies. The whole capital of the old Roman world was invested in the scheme, truly named "the mystery of iniquity." Power was given it over all kindreds and tongues and nations. A change has come, and we see how. "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue, and people; saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come." But how is this great giant power to be assailed? By what means, weakened, abased and abolished? Who shall begin it? The truth sounded out, and the work was done. One is

called for, to give voice to the truth, and one is found. He was taking quite another course, when God gave him the story of Hannah and Samuel to read, and breathed into him the desire to have the Book which contained it. God gave him this, and gave him to know what he means in that word, "The just shall live by faith." With this knowledge Martin Luther became a new man. The hideous forms of wickedness found in that gigantic despotism were gradually unveiled to his sight, and he began to cry aloud. God gave him the courage and the power equal to the occasion. His friends beg him to retire from the post of duty and of danger; his reply is, "I came to fight the battle of truth, and God is on my side." He confronts his sovereign with his officers and nobles,

and one more than all—the representative of him whose throne is upon the seven hills; the demand is made that he recant—he calmly answers, "My conscience, and the word of God hold me prisoner, therefore I may not, nor will recant. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God, Amen."

"Crowned with the grace of everlasting truth,
A more than monarch among kings he stood."

The word of the Lord, by this man and by others of the like royal stamp, vindicates its ancient renown. The vast and rich results are before us. Achievements so magnificent by instruments so weak assure our hearts before God. The changes in the tactics of the adversaries of the gospel have been the means of revealing a power in the truth, which would have been other-

wise hidden. We think it well, since there must be doubters, that powerful minds have doubted, and that the intellect of such men has been fully whetted. Seeing there must be scepticism, we are satisfied to see the great thinkers, and the great doubters, starting on the scent of a difficulty in every direction, animating one another and following it as far as they are able. The time was when such minds were allowed to achieve splendid successes. There was none to question them—and the world crowned them. But these times have passed. No mind undertakes such mischief now, but finds another mind in pursuit, but finds itself overtaken, detected and exposed in its evil work. Truth encounters error in every disguise, and in the light of its demonstrations, error after error

has become powerless. It is with wonder and delight we behold Paul, and Augustine, and Calvin, within the sphere of the visible church, meeting great and wide-spread errors, and full of deadly poison, and taking the strength and life out of them by the sword of the Spirit.

We thank deistical writers, not for what they have attempted to do, but for what they have succeeded in doing—in giving us our Lelands and Paleys and Butlers. Even Hume did not live in vain, nor frame his grand sophism in vain—a sophism which fades into thin air before geological facts; since through this we have been furnished with the demonstrations of a Campbell and a Whateley. If Arminianism has done nothing else, it has, as the occasion, furnished for the reading of man-

kind the immortal reasonings of an Edwards. Persecution has aimed a deathblow at truth, it has been God's way of using blinded men to blazon the christian virtues, and develope the omnipotent strength of the gospel. The persecuting government of the Second Charles shut up Bunyan in prison; we are thankful there was a place, and a prison was perhaps the only place, whence he could have given his matchless allegory to his race. Neology, Materialism, Pantheism, the Positive Philosophy are doing their work likewise, for they are summoning sanctified genius to new efforts, and are preparing the way for the works of new masters, of which more than the first fruits are already ours. Thus it has ever been since Jesus claimed all power in heaven and earth. The efforts of his enemies

have quickened the energies of his friends. As he sent forth apostles furnished with miraculous powers, and so fully equipped for their peculiar work, so has he clothed with the armour of light the mind which he has claimed as his own, and qualified it for meeting unsanctified talent upon every field to which it has been challenged. Error is a condemned criminal, and since the coronation of Jesus it has been, like Cain, a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth. By apostles it was confronted at once by truth, and overpowered by it. The path of pursuit has been to truth, a career of victory. Nothing that apostles encountered has been seen these hundreds of years. Force after force has disappeared. Systems built with consummate skill, and of the best materials, appear deserted, or their

fragments only are visible along the wastes of time. The gospel lives, and is growing into strength and dominion through its incessant conflicts and successive conquests.

The extent of the power it has won for itself, adds much to the strength of this support. How far and how rapidly it spread at first, we know. In our own times we have seen it unfettered, and taking a new hold of mankind no less remarkable than in the apostolic age. As the undulations produced by the stone dropped upon the surface of the quiet lake, extend outward in every direction, and flow on to the shore, so do we see the truth of God make a way for itself to the limits of the Roman earth, and so now do we see it spreading, by a force and a law of its own, over the whole world. It

passes by no class, but like the light penetrates everywhere and serves all. In the Protestant Reformation, the Mediator has been purifying his temple anew. He has set up his candlestick in its place, the two olive trees supply it with oil, and the light goes no more out. The pulpit proclaiming the gospel of the grace of God, and the press giving a free Bible to all men, are working revolution and renovation throughout the race. The truth is no more driven into dens and desert places, and at the mercy of its enemies. It moves openly among us; it receives the highest public honours. Every christian population, save where the son of perdition has sway, welcomes it; the heathen tolerate it. Aye more, the souls of millions, free and thirsting for God, demand it from the pulpit

and the press, as they demand daily bread; and souls without number not yet escaped from pagan darkness, are beginning to look and inquire for day. With all that is corrupt and corrupting among men, we find that, to an amazing extent, genius moulds its productions, instructors prepare and deliver their lessons, society forms its usages, states—the first and greatest—frame their laws, and rulers administer their trust, in the light of divine truth. Over a wide area, sanctuaries, erected for the worship of one living God and for the public teaching of his truth, greet our eyes—sanctuaries where millions meet whose hearts are fixed to seek the favour of God. The angel who has the everlasting gospel to preach is speeding his flight, and from out of many lands yet in pagan darkness the

voice of rejoicing and salvation in the tabernacles of the righteous reaches us. "The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted. The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly."

As we gaze upon the victories of truth, confidence fills our souls. Such have been the Mediator's ways, that our "faith stands not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God."

APPLICATION TO THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

"We walk by faith." It is this which gives distinction, character and weight to the ministerial office. True of all who are in Christ by faith, it is preeminently true of those who minister the gospel of God, and have the oversight of souls. Of all men, we, in our official duties, are laid under the

necessity of walking by faith. Divine things grow familiar—like objects that are known through our senses. The truth becomes spiritual light, before which all darkness and every mist of doubt passes away. The Bible revelation becomes the highest reason, the most profound philosophy, the all comprehensive science, and in it we see the perfection of beauty. Such virtue is in faith, and such present grace does it bring. But it is ours, not to consume life reclining idly at the feast which wisdom has prepared. We are commissioned to preach, teach, baptize, disciple the nations, and to feed the flock of God. It is laid upon us to declare the truth, not ours, but His, who made us and redeemed us, upon his authority, openly to all men. Men of like passions with others, it is ours to

stand in the name of God, and dispense this truth to our fellow men, which, in its first use, confronts them with the living God; which makes the point—and there is no evading it—whether they will be for him, or against him; which defines the terms on which they may be one with him; which comprises all motives to turn away from sin, and enter his service; and to accept which is to enter into a union with him, in which is life; and to refuse which is to make a separation from him, in which is death—each without end. We are to repeat the utterances of the mind of God in this Book, shunning nothing, concealing nothing, changing nothing, but careful to give the mind of God entire, and nothing but this. We are to do this, repudiating our own skill, wisdom and power, and under a

full conviction that we, yea, even Paul and Apollos, are ministers only, incapable of giving effect to the divine testimony, and, at most, serving only to bring the truth before the heirs of salvation. These are unknown to us; and our whole work, beyond the mere utterance of the truth, lies in a region where we can neither see nor go. We become sensible that the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. We find ourselves addressing our discourse to persons who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not, and having hearts, understand not. We find that our work is like trying to make the blind see, and the deaf hear, and the dumb speak. All this we are satisfied must be done by means of the truth we minister. And then when the senses seem to be re-

stored, and the truth is no longer ineffectual because it is not seen, we are confronted by a fixed and deadly aversion of the soul to accept salvation on the ground of the righteousness which is by faith; and all manifestation of the truth to the conscience in the sight of God serves, it may be, but to expose the measures of depravity—shown, now in utter insensibility, now in secret hostility, now in open defiance, now in the deliberate choice of perdition—depravity, not a particle of which we can remove or reach. There is a change to be wrought here for which the power of God alone is equal, and before the mighty force, and the mysterious workings of sin we are made to feel our utter impotence. The disguises and hiding places of sin are so many that we find exposure and pursuit unavailing,

and we are cast upon Him who has skill enough, and power enough, and compassion enough, to enter the house, and bind the strong man, and cast him out, and take possession himself. Thus it is through the whole work, beginning in the arrest of the sinner, and ending in the presentation of the saint before God. We are kept leaning upon his arm whose the work is; we are kept walking by faith.

In matters of such fearful moment, it is safe and best to walk by faith. It turns life to ourselves into a course of training for a future of honour and glory, best carried on in this way in which we see the power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are ever kept learning of him who was meek and lowly. The demonstration and power he gives the truth by his Spirit,

are our encouragement to constancy in the part he has assigned us. There is less uncertainty about success in this, than in any other walk in life. The word shall not return void, but accomplish what he pleases, and prosper whereto he sends it. We are permitted to see it prove itself sharper than a two-edged sword, and the enemies of the Lord struck with terror, fleeing from his presence or suing for pardon. If the battle be the Lord's, it is ours to see the strongholds of sin fall, when he makes bare his arm, and stout hearts strongly fortified in error and unrighteousness, melting like wax at his presence. We witness darkness turned into light, and souls that were lost in the mazes of sin restored to day. We behold the prodigal's return through the power of a right thought which

God may have employed us to convey. We witness the prisoner set at liberty, and his galling chains removed, and we hear the song of the heart which the Lord hath made glad. We see miracles of the grace of God wrought through the truth we minister. "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind, he raiseth up them that are bowed down. He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds."

Into what scenes of thrilling interest faith has introduced us! Into what other scenes, how far surpassing these, it is conducting us! We are co-workers with God. Our subjects are not temporal but eternal, and we are never to quit them. We are only beginning to enter upon them. For what is all we witness here but simply a work of preparation? Out of the wreck sin has made, God is

erecting a temple for himself. As yet we have been looking at this from without, and at a distance. It is the massive strength of its foundation, and the grandeur and exquisite finish of the porch, and the inimitable characters of the door which have kindled our admiration. We have at most but got our feet upon the threshold. The abundant entrance is yet to come. It will come presently. We walk by faith now; in a little it will be otherwise. We are upon the eve of entering into new conditions of being, as unlike the present, which are determined by faith in God, as these last are unlike those which mark the life of the natural man. The earthly house of this tabernacle is to be dissolved, and then we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The one state surpasses the

other so far, that, though the riches of divine grace be accessible now, it is no sin to groan where we are, through desire to be introduced into our future abode. Language cannot express what is coming. Let us say, mortality is swallowed up in life. Let us say, at home in the body we are absent from the Lord, and, absent from the body, we are present with the Lord. We hail the approach of the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ. It brings with it an advance over our present methods of beholding the glory, learning the mind, and enjoying the favour of God, greater by far than that which takes place here through the introduction of the revelation of God, and faith in this. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

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